

COMMERCIAL REPORTS

FROM

HER MAJESTY'S CONSULS

IN

CHINA AND SIAM.

1869.

(In continuation of Reports presented to Parliament,
July 26, 1869.)

*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
August 1869.*

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S I A M.

No. 15.

Consul-General Knox to the Earl of Clarendon.—(Received May 7.)

My Lord,

Bangkok, March 25, 1869.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith my Trade Report for the year 1868, together with the Returns of British and Foreign Shipping at this Port during the same period. I would have forwarded this Report at an earlier date, but I waited in the expectation of being able to obtain from the Siamese Custom-house a reliable Table of Imports to be incorporated with it.

I have, &c.

(Signed) THOMAS GEORGE KNOX.

Inclosure in No. 15.

*Report on the Trade at the Port of Bangkok for the Year 1868.**Exports.*

UNTIL the year 1867 our principal trade was mainly made up of a large export of rice to China. This demand having then in great measure ceased, those engaged in the business here were obliged to look for new markets.

This they fortunately found, and during the past year no less than sixty-nine vessels have cleared with full cargoes for Europe, and others have sailed for the Mauritius, California, and Australia.

In consequence of this change of markets the rice business of this port has been during the last twelve months almost exclusively in the hands of the European merchants residing in this country, and as they have nearly all steam rice-mills of their own, the change to them has been a satisfactory one. As their numbers are limited they have to a certain extent been able to control prices, which have in consequence been considerably lower than for some years past. Still, though the growers of rice have not been able to obtain the high prices of 1864-65, yet there is no reason to suppose that their labour has been otherwise than profitable to them. Therefore, even at present prices the cultivation of rice will, in all probability, continue to increase. The reason generally given for the cessation of the demand for China is, that the crops of that country have been exceptionally good during the last two years. I however understand that, in 1867, the Chinese Government issued a decree allowing the rice of those provinces where there was a surplus to be exported to those where there was a deficiency, and I think this the more probable reason of the two. Should, however, rice be again in demand for China, prices are sure to rise beyond the present rates; for every Chinese trader in this place embarks in that trade when he sees a chance, and as it is an article of necessity, and may rise to famine prices, he speculates on the odd chance, and buys at all risks.

During the last year two canals running through a considerable tract of country hitherto uncultivated have been opened, and a good deal of the adjoining land will be planted with rice during the coming season.

Such articles as teel-seed, stick lac, gum Benjamin, &c., have been in considerable demand during the past twelve months.

Teel-seed, a ramtil (*Guizotia oleifera*), is grown in the northern provinces of Siam. It yields a very bland oil and resembles olive oil in many of its properties; 49,000 piculs have been exported during the last twelve months.

Teak has been exported in considerable quantities to China during the year past. The Burmese foresters, who have hitherto been working for the Maulmein market, are fast coming over to this side, where the trees are much easier got at. They also state that some of our forests produce larger and better timber than those on the Maulmein side.

The Siamese authorities are beginning to see the great advantages the country will reap when these forests are properly opened up, and the Governors of the Upper Provinces have been ordered to give every encouragement to those who will undertake the work.

I fully expect that before long we shall have a large export trade in this timber.

The exports of Siam during the past year have been in excess of those of any former year with the single exception of those of 1864.

Imports.

There has been an entire change in the Import Revenue Department during the past year, and I have in consequence been unable to obtain reliable Returns, but it is promised that for the future we shall have Returns drawn up which shall truly represent the import trade of this port. Shipping Return No. 2, which accompanies this Report, shows the total value of import cargoes.

Shipping.

There has been a greater amount of tonnage employed by Siam during 1868 than in any previous year. British vessels have had more than an average share of this employment. There is a great improvement in the build and general appearance of the British ships which visit this port, and they are much better adapted to the trade than their predecessors of four or five years since. Formerly, foreign vessels, notably those from Hamburg, having a less draught of water with the same capacity for tonnage had a decided preference, but the new class of British vessels more than hold their own in this respect. The crews are also very much better behaved than was the case some few years back, and have far more real sailors amongst them.

The Tables which accompany this Report are—

Shipping Return No. 1.—Return of British shipping at the port of Bangkok during the year 1868.

Shipping Return No. 2.—Return of British and foreign shipping at the Port of Bangkok during the year 1868.

Shipping Return No. 3.—Return of foreign shipping at the Port of Bangkok, engaged in the direct and indirect trade during the year 1868.

Table showing the rates of exchange on London, Singapore, and Hong Kong during the year 1868.

(Signed)

THOMAS GEORGE KNOX.

Her Britannic Majesty's Consulate-General,

Bangkok, March 25, 1869.

(No. 1.)—RETURN of British Shipping at the Port of Bangkok, during the Year 1868.

Direct Trade in British Vessels from and to Great Britain and British Colonies.

Whence Arrived.	ENTERED.							CLEARED.									
	Number of Vessels.			Total Tonnage.			Total Number of Crews.	Total Value of Cargoes in sterling.	Whither Bound.	Number of Vessels.			Total Tonnage.			Total Number of Crews.	Total value of Cargoes in sterling.
	With Cargoes.	In Ballast.	Total.	With Cargoes.	In Ballast.	Total.				With Cargoes.	In Ballast.	Total.	With Cargoes.	In Ballast.	Total.		
Hong Kong ...	6	46	52	2,740	22,165	24,905	883	11,110		Great Britain ...	31	...	31	17,478	...	17,478	556	100,540
Singapore ...	26	7	53	9,146	3,095	12,241	500	43,332	Singapore ...	23	1	24	7,093	353	7,446	489	39,695
Bombay ...	3	2	5	1,631	1,439	3,070	102	9,464	Gibraltar ...	1	...	1	398	...	398	14	5,672
Point de Galle ...	...	1	1	...	244	244	10	...	Hong Kong ...	24	...	24	11,206	...	11,206	416	68,050
Madras ...	...	1	1	...	399	399	12	...	Bombay ...	6	...	6	3,053	...	3,053	118	15,722
	35	57	92	13,517	27,342	40,859	1,507	63,806		65	1	66	39,228	353	39,581	1,563	258,279

Indirect or Carrying Trade in British Vessels from and to other Countries.

Chinese Ports ...	1	6	7	536	3,450	3,986	143	200	Chinese Ports ...	5	...	5	3,817	...	3,817	148	22,874
Saigon ...	1	3	4	261	2,131	2,392	83	260	Muscat ...	1	...	1	563	...	563	40	10,008
	2	9	11	797	5,581	6,378	226	460	Belle Isle ...	1	...	1	309	...	309	12	2,250
	37	66	103	14,314	32,223	47,237	1,733	64,266		10	...	10	4,779	...	4,779	300	35,132
										95	1	96	44,007	353	44,360	1,563	298,411

British Consulate, Bangkok, March 25, 1869.

(Signed)

THOMAS GEORGE KNOX, *Consul-General.*

(No. 2.)—RETURN of British and Foreign Shipping at the Port of Bangkok, during the Year 1868.

Nationality of Vessels	ENTERED.										CLEARED.											
	With Cargoes.			In Ballast.			Total.				Invoice Value of Cargoes.	With Cargoes.			In Ballast.			Total.				Invoice Value of Cargoes.
	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Vessels.		Tons.	Crews.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.			
English	37	14,314	750	66	32,923	983	107	47,337	1,733	64,266	95	44,007	1,851	1	333	12	96	44,360	1,863	£ 293,411		
French	3	961	...	4	1,952	...	7	2,913	350	3,500	5	1,621	...	...	...	...	5	1,621	...	12,112
American	3	1,500	...	11	7,405	...	14	9,205	...	1,954	12	7,873	...	1	838	...	13	8,711	...	42,110		
North German	30	12,190	420	33	13,201	443	63	25,391	863	39,137	60	24,725	815	...	...	...	60	24,725	815	156,913
Portuguese	5	750	50	1	447	16	6	1,197	66	2,540	5	750	...	...	...	...	5	750	...	3,500
Sweden and Norway ... ..	...	...	...	3	1,178	...	3	1,178	...	...	3	1,178	...	...	...	...	3	1,178	...	7,495
Dutch	13	3,347	...	3	1,161	...	16	4,508	...	31,000	14	4,204	...	...	...	...	14	4,204	...	22,482
South American ... ..	...	...	...	1	1,100	...	1	1,100	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Hawaiian ... ..	...	...	...	2	1,076	...	...	...	...	...	2	1,076	...	...	...	...	2	1,076	...	6,326
Danish	1	340	...	3	754	...	4	994	...	300	1	994	...	...	...	4	994	...	3,700	
Russian ... ..	...	...	...	1	557	...	1	557	...	...	1	557	...	...	...	1	557	...	2,190	
Siamese	116	43,358	...	10	3,659	...	126	47,017	...	550,391	114	45,479	...	...	...	111	45,479	...	397,778	
Junks to China ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	50,000
Total	208	76,960	...	138	65,413	...	346	142,373	...	712,288	315	132,464	...	2	1,191	...	317	133,655	...	990,817		

BANGKOK.

British Consulate, Bangkok, March 25, 1869.

(Signed)

THOMAS GEORGE KNOX, Consul-General.

(No. 3.)—RETURN of Foreign Shipping at the Port of Bangkok engaged in the Direct and Indirect Trade during the year 1868

Nationality of Vessels.	ENTERED.						CLEARED.					
	Direct Trade.		Indirect Trade.		Total.		Direct Trade.		Indirect Trade.		Total.	
	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.
French .. .. .	..	..	7	2,913	7	2,913	2	752	3	869	5	1,621
American .. .. .	..	..	14	9,205	14	9,205	1	256	12	7,617	13	7,873
North German	1	440	62	24,951	63	25,391	12	4,915	18	19,780	60	24,725
Dutch .. .. .	..	..	16	4,508	16	4,508	6	1,515	8	2,689	14	4,204
Portuguese	1	447	5	750	6	1,197	..	..	5	750	5	750
Swedish and Norwegian .. .. .	..	..	3	1,178	3	1,178	..	..	3	1,178	3	1,178
Russian .. .. .	..	..	1	557	1	557	..	..	1	557	1	557
Danish .. .. .	..	..	4	994	4	994	..	..	4	994	4	994
South American .. .. .	..	..	1	1,100	1	1,100	..	..	..	..	..	..
Hawaiian .. .. .	..	..	2	1,076	2	1,076	..	..	2	1,076	2	1,076
Siamese	126	47,017	..	..	126	47,017	114	45,479	..	..	114	45,479

British Consulate, Bangkok, March 25, 1869.

(Signed)

THOMAS GEORGE KNOX, Consul-General.

COURSE of Exchange in Bangkok, during the Year 1868.

	On London, six months' sight.	On Singapore, ten days' sight.	On Hong Kong, thirty days' sight.
1868.	<i>s. d.</i>		
January ..	4 3	3 per cent. premium.	1 per cent. discount.
February ..	4 3	Ditto.	Ditto.
March . ..	4 3	Ditto.	Ditto.
April . . .	4 3	3½ per cent. premium.	Par.
May	4 3	Ditto.	Ditto.
June	4 2¾	Ditto.	Ditto.
July	4 3¾	Ditto.	Ditto.
August ..	4 3½	5 per cent. premium.	2 per cent. premium.
September ..	4 3½	6 per cent. premium.	Ditto.
October ..	4 3½	Ditto.	Ditto.
November ..	4 4	2½ per cent. premium.	1 per cent. discount.
December ..	4 6	Par.	3 per cent. discount.

(Signed)

THOMAS GEORGE KNOX,
*Consul-General.**British Consulate, Bangkok, March 25, 1869.*